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United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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April 6, 1983

The Honorable Barry Goldwater
Chairman
Select Committee on Intelligence
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Barry:


Your letter on releasing unclassified versions of two CIA reports raises important issues. Going back to Richard Helms and continuing through William Colby, George Bush, and Stansfield Turner, CIA regularly issued a wide variety of unclassified analytic reports to the public. Director Casey changed this policy in 1981 because he thought it created too much controversy for CIA.

Since then, the public has not had the benefit of the CIA's objective, professional judgments not only on Soviet military expenditures and aid to less developed countries, but also on such topics as Soviet agricultural developments, Chinese defense spending, East European hard currency debt, and conditions affecting the flow of Indo-China refugees. I am particularly interested, for example, in a recent CIA report on "Soviet Grain Imports" that might have been released in unclassified form under the previous policy.

It seems to me that Director Casey made a mistake when he stopped releasing these reports, and I think our Committee should tell him so. On the other hand, we have to be careful not to encourage the practice of selective release of CIA reports either to support or oppose particular policies. There should be objective criteria that encourage CIA to release its unclassified findings on as many issues as possible, consistent with protection of sources and methods.

The real issue is how to avoid politicizing CIA analysis, while giving the public the information it needs. Excessive secrecy just breeds more politically motivated leaks, the slanting of CIA data by other agencies, or the selective use of intelligence to promote one side. For that reason, I cannot support CIA's release of reports on only two topics. Instead, the CIA should go back to its previous policy of releasing unclassified analysis on a wide variety of subjects.

Sincerely,


Walter D. Huddleston